

**Illinois Early Learning Council
Family and Community Engagement
All Families Served Subcommittee – Poverty/Deep Poverty Work Group**

Illinois Action for Children

*** 4753 N Broadway ***

(Bridgeview Bank Building)

10th Floor – Suite 1002

Chicago, IL 60640

Cars parked in Broadview Bank building will be towed.

Ample metered parking available in the lot across from the Bridgeview Bank Building (north side of Lawrence Ave, immediately west of El tracks)

August 18, 2015 • 12:30pm – 1:15pm

Agenda

Toll-Free Dial-in Number: 1-866-802-6672

Participant Passcode: 247 437

- Welcome and Introductions
 - Attendees: Debra Floyd, Gloria Harris, Veronica Mercado, Madelyn James, Shauna Ejeh, Angela Bailey, Janet Vergas
- Presentation: Preschool Enrollment Initiative (COFI POWER-PAC)
 - COFI gave summary of previous projects and background of POWER-PAC
 - Surveyed 86 parents, conducted 16 focus groups, across the 7 neighborhoods: Englewood, Roseland, Pilsen, Little Village, Humboldt Park, Austin, North Lawndale. Included parents with children enrolled, and those without children enrolled.
 - Based off focus groups, COFI developed 8 recommendations to increase enrollment in early learning programs and enhance Ready to Learn Campaign:
 - Simplify the registration process and make it more family-friendly, so families can register quickly and easily
 - Expand peer to peer outreach, especially in areas where there are high concentration of families that are homeless, have children with disabilities, are involved in DCFS, and are teen parents
 - Ensure supports for families are available to assist with the registration and enrollment process year round
 - Improve communication and data tracking so centers can easily share referrals and are aware of available slots, so families do not have to be on the waiting list
 - Develop awareness campaign for screenings and early intervention so families can access specialized services and receive assistance with transitions into preschool
 - Increase health supports in centers to eliminate barriers for children needing specialized care
 - Promote the development of visible classroom curriculum and staff background in centers, so families can clearly understand what the centers offer
 - Ensure the necessary slots are free or affordable to meet families child care need

- Observations that were surprising:
 - Some parents didn't understand differences between childcare and preschool
 - Story of a homeless family enrolling child in program, center staff (incorrectly) reporting them to DCFS, family fled state. Points to importance of multiple systems understanding rights, requirements, and procedures.
 - Particularly with first roll-out, parents confused about Ready to Learn enrollment process, especially the requirements for registering at in-person sites. CPS not asking community members for input was problematic, but COFI gave feedback and CPS willing to make changes. Misinformation is still an issue.
 - School consolidations and co-locating is problematic for young children too; often older sibling doesn't feel safe walking them to a school outside certain boundaries.
- Key point to note: Participants want to know where the report goes. Parents often feel that they give input but don't see outcomes or hear feedback.
 - Suggestion: distribute report/summary in early learning centers, give public acknowledgements/appreciations in community weekly newsletters
- Strategy Memo: Overview and Section 1 Discussion
 - Problem Statement discussed, however tabled until next steps completed
- Next Steps: Discuss background research with colleagues, Identify themes for Section 2
 - Important that we get input on poverty/deep poverty issues from communities outside Cook. Likely to have different challenges across state. Poverty likely to look different outside urban environment. Strategies and recommendations developed in Chicago might not be scalable to other areas.
 - Connect with AoK Networks (COFI)
 - Check with IZ's to see if we can highlight poverty/deep poverty work in their communities (Angela)
 - See if we can gather parent feedback with COFI during October IZ meeting
 - As members collect info, pool on Google docs (include ELC approved definitions for poverty/deep poverty)
- Adjourn